



Foundations for Volunteer Leadership

CAP needs active members, men and women who are eager to serve their community. Active members attend unit meetings, follow-through with the tasks they agree to perform, train to increase their skills, and cooperate with the other members of the CAP team.

In CAP, we believe the formula for developing a corps of active members is found in the concept of valuing. CAP leaders value the efforts of their fellow volunteers by providing them with opportunities for personal achievement, allowing them to make discoveries about themselves and others, and helping them form social bonds that strengthen the community. Good leadership is about valuing each member.

Valuing Defined

According to the dictionary, there are several definitions involved in the concept of “valuing”:

1. *Value – The fair price or return. The social principles, goals, or standards held or accepted by an individual, class, society, etc.*
2. *Valuing - To place a certain estimate of worth on in a scale of values*
3. *Partnership – Participation, joint interest, an association of two or more partners*

GOALS FOR THIS MODULE:

1. Discuss the concept of “valuing” members in a volunteer organization.
2. Identify factors that motivate people to volunteer.
3. Describe basic expectations volunteers and leaders have of one another.
4. Explain how mentoring can help new members get started in CAP.



Part 1 **The Call to Serve**

To value each member, first we must understand why they have volunteered to serve. What motivates people to donate their time and energy to the community? As a new volunteer, you will undoubtedly recognize some of your own motivations in the list below. Everyone in CAP needs to understand how these principles of volunteerism shape our organization. They set the standard for leadership in CAP and guide us as we serve America together. Some factors that call people to serve include:

- Achievement
- Recognition
- Personal growth
- Giving something back
- Bringing about social change
- Family ties
- Friendship and a sense of belonging

Achievement

New members value the opportunity to contribute. When leaders recognize their contributions, volunteers gain a sense of satisfaction and achievement. Accomplishing the mission and discovering new capabilities in oneself are two of the compensations valued by new members. The

opportunity to accomplish something worthwhile, to see how one's personal effort contributes to the mission, will motivate new members to stay involved.

It is important for CAP to provide new members with the opportunity to achieve something by matching the new member with the job that is likely to provide the kind of results the volunteer values.

Recognition and Feedback

Contributing to the mission can be its own reward. Many volunteers do not seek any recognition for their efforts, but good leaders will always say thank you, even if the member feels the thanks is unnecessary. Whenever possible, feedback needs to be immediate and specific. It can be more meaningful if someone in authority delivers the thanks. Recognition of a new member's efforts is not valued if the organizational support is missing. It is important for everyone on the team to recognize and support new members' contributions as they are made.

Personal Growth

Among the major rewards and incentives for new members is the opportunity for personal growth. Discovering new skills and capabilities, learning more about themselves and other people, and overcoming personal challenges often serve as key motivators for volunteers.

New members value contributions to society, and that underlies their commitment to join the CAP.

Giving Something Back to Society

New members may hope to contribute something to society, and that underlies their commitment to join

the CAP. They want a better world to live in and they have recognized that it starts with them volunteering with CAP. A related theme is that of making stronger community ties through CAP volunteer involvement, where CAP provides the opportunities to work with others in related organizations in their community.

Bringing About Social Change

New members value and get satisfaction from educating people about the causes and organizations they work for. There is a great sense of bringing about social change that occurs when new members are well prepared to voice the good CAP does for America.



Family Ties

Many volunteers make CAP a family activity. It is common for volunteerism to “run in the family.” Researchers have found that people who volunteer during their teens are more likely to volunteer and contribute to civic life as adults. When families volunteer together, the family is strengthened and children grow up with the notion that volunteerism is an important aspect of citizenship.

Friendship, Support, Bonding and a Feeling of Belonging

For many new members, the human factor is a paramount reason for their joining CAP. Making new friends, building new social links, and developing a feeling of belonging give them the incentive to value CAP’s programs. CAP becomes an especially fun way to perform community service when members count many friends in the organization.

CAP provides a safe,
comfortable, and friendly
place for community service.

Part 2 **Leadership in a Volunteer Organization**

While each member may have a unique reason for joining CAP, it is fair to say that all members hold in common some basic expectations about their leaders. The list below, paraphrased from, *Volunteers: How to Get Them, How to Keep Them* by Helen Little, summarizes basic leadership guidelines CAP encourages all members to follow. In short, this list describes what you can expect from your leaders.

1. *Tasks that match each member’s interests*
 - Members should be allowed to identify what tasks they prefer to do.
 - Members should be asked what they want to learn or accomplish by volunteering.
2. *Reasonable tasks and fair deadlines*
 - The member agrees to follow a reasonable timelines for assignments.
 - Agendas and notices must be received in plenty of time to elicit feedback.
 - Members should not be overwhelmed by assignments.
3. *An understanding of the “big picture”*
 - The member is shown how their task fits into the overall mission.
 - The member knows the benefits of completing the task on time and well.
4. *Easy to understand instructions*
 - Members need access to program manuals, forms and instructions.
 - Members should receive a summary of their task descriptions that save volunteer time.

- Members should be able to contact other volunteers and staff by phone or email if they have questions.

5. *Adequate training*

- Members should receive training that helps them succeed in the organization.
- Members should be invited to attend professional development courses.
- Mentors should be available to work with new members on an individual basis.

6. *A safe, comfortable, and friendly working environment*

- The organization should meet in a physically appealing and safe place.
- The meeting location and time should be convenient to most group members.

7. *Meaningful feedback*

- Members should be thanked for their efforts.
- Feedback should be two-way; allowing both the leader and the new member to offer constructive comments.
- Leaders should provide practical tips to help members improve how they perform their volunteer jobs.

8. *Thanks and recognition*

- Recognition and rewards are important.
- If the task is especially challenging, the reward should be greater and more significant or prestigious.
- Every member deserves thanks for their efforts.

9. *Opportunities to lead and grow within the organization*

- Members should have an opportunity to function as a leader or supervisor, as their experience grows.
- Leaders should keep volunteers informed of the different avenues for serving in the organization.

10. *Opportunities to partner with employers*

- The organization should provide brochures to help employers understand why the employee's volunteer service is important to the community.
- The organization's professional development program should help members develop leadership skills that they can apply in their workplace.
- Members should see if their employer offers any grant programs that would help the organization further its mission in the community.

Leadership in CAP begins with valuing the efforts of each member. Volunteers offer their time, energy, and money to support the humanitarian missions of CAP. Without CAP volunteers, there would be no CAP – no emergency services, no aerospace education, no cadet programs.

As a new member, you should expect CAP leaders to treat you fairly and follow the spirit of the guidelines above. Likewise, as you interact with your fellow CAP members, remember to treat them fairly and value their unique contributions.

Part 3

How Mentoring Bridges the Valuing Gap

A mentoring program matches a new person with an experienced person who is willing to serve as a coach, guide, teacher, or advisor (and sometimes they serve in all of those roles at once). Because mentoring is intrinsically a one-on-one activity, the relationship between the mentor and the new member is flexible. How they work together is up to them.

CAP is a complex operation. Its leaders have to know how to motivate a great number of staff and volunteers, set realistic goals, and comply with CAP regulations and policies. Mentors' best advice early in the relationship helps new members learn what is important, and what takes priority in the first six months and the first year. Most new members will appreciate the mentor guiding them through the maze of information.

While the mentor has a responsibility to help the new member get started in an unfamiliar organization, the member must actively participate in their own mentoring, too. For example, mentoring will succeed best when the new member makes a list of questions to ask their mentor, listens carefully to the mentor's advice and direction, and voices any concerns they have about the organization so that the mentor and other leaders have a chance to resolve any problems early on. Mentoring is effective when both the mentor and new member work together. Each individual will gain from the mentoring experience only what they invest into it.

Conclusion

All CAP members are valuable to our organization. The experienced members help to indoctrinate the new members and accelerate the new member's contributions. New members bring new perspectives and links to the community, among other assets. New members also have needs that they bring to the organization, and they should be asked to articulate them. When these needs are met with appropriate training, feedback, and recognition, new members will be successful and will propel CAP forward.

All CAP members are valuable.

